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FORMER STATE LEGISLATOR

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[00:00:00] **MICHAEL:** What do you want me to talk about again? Rephrase the question.

[00:00:10] **WILLIAM:** Talk about leadership. We ended our conversation last time by talking about the types of politics that was played by the various leadership groups in the community. You mentioned that one group played—the primary type of politics that was played by Blacks, the sub-establishment politics, in other words, subgroups, sub-community politics.

[00:00:34] **MICHAEL:** Yeah right, mainly those groups act as brokers for the greater community establishment. You gave me a general question. I thought you were asking me specific questions so I can—

[00:00:46] **WILLIAM:** No, I'm not really because what we're dealing with—We're dealing more with theory now.

[00:00:50] **MICHAEL:** Okay. If you can ask me specifically questions that are more particular about theory.

[00:00:56] **WILLIAM:** Okay. What other—What is the primary mode of local community leaders? Primary mode of leadership by our local leaders?

[00:01:07] **MICHAEL:** Primary role? That of a spokesman.

[00:01:12] **WILLIAM:** And how did that relate to acquiring greater resources from the dominant community by extracting greater resources?

[00:01:21] **MICHAEL:** Well they look at a spokesman and they operate usually within two contexts. One context is they're a spokesman, the dominant mode is that there are spokesmen who call upon the goodwill of the greater community, the establishment. Sometimes some establishment groups, liberal groups have a few dollars or have some political clout to assist them in doing the right thing for the minorities. Another role they act in—Another environment. That would be, say, environment number one. Environment two would be, there is a problem that the masses of people are concerned about. They might articulate it or do anything about it, but they're upset. Say, for instance, there's a wanton shooting by a police officer who went berserk, or in the case of Larry Ward where there was obvious entrapment. In the initial news, it was let out that the person or persons that had been responsible for several bombings in the city of Seattle had been killed while attempting to light another bomb, set off another bomb. Then the information came out that Larry Ward couldn't have been involved in the previous bombings because he was in Vietnam. Then, some people got very concerned. Well, the way the spokesmen operate is that within that kind of environment is that they then position themselves in between the authority figures in the establishment and the masses of people and they in fact articulate their needs.

[00:03:09] **WILLIAM:** But what about—Does that example hold true for the United Construction Workers and the CCA [Central Contractors Association] ?

[00:03:16] **MICHAEL:** The third mode of leadership and probably that which has caused the results. I thought you meant the kind of established—What I call the moderate responsible colored fellow who everybody likes, say, the head of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] , or the Urban League, or someone like that who's looked at as being reasonable by the establishment. The third mode of leadership is what is viewed as radical leadership, which is based upon the thing that there can be no negotiations or there can be no change without struggle, which very simply says that if it's nothing more than straw that you waving in somebody's face, at least you have some command of their attention and you have some leverage against them.

[00:04:05] **WILLIAM:** So it comes from the tradition of Alinsky's type of organization?

[00:04:09] **MICHAEL:** Yeah, Alinsky. You're in fact saying , to the point you're denying the greater community or deny to the greater community in terms of its ability to do business as usual, which means that you have something to negotiate with them about. You're either denying them something or making things unpleasant for them to the extent that they're willing to do some things that are right for your community. Now, usually when that happens, the other kinds of leadership also comes into play is that they will serve, or will attempt to serve, as mediators. That is environment number one. They'll be the ones that articulate the needs of

the people and attempt to mediate between you and the establishment. In the second environment, they will try to serve as spokesmen also.

[00:05:03] **WILLIAM:** So what you gain, what you get then is a conflict within the minority community and sub-community competing for a power role?

[00:05:16] **MICHAEL:** There may be competition and to some extent it is called power. But quite often when you talk about the kind of so-called moderate, to put a label on it, moderate responsible Black leadership, the ones head of established organizations that the establishment considers dollars to, you know, buy dinner tickets to, or work on various advisory committees with. In a situation like that, what they're really doing is really not so much competing for the power at that point in time, but to maintain what they perceive to be their position.

[00:06:00] **WILLIAM:** So they don't want to be pushed out of the existing role they had before?

MICHAEL. Right. So as a consequence, they forced them to try to position themselves, to the extent where one—Trying to operate like they usually do in environment number one that I mentioned, which is to serve as another spokesman for articulating the needs and concerns of the people. Environment number two is one where they're attempting to position themselves between an issue that x number of the community people, broad based support, masses, are concerned about. Concerned about to the extent that they are supporting leadership that is taking what, in effect, is a radical position and putting some leverage, putting pressure on the establishment to make changes. So now where conflict comes really is that the establishment then says to the moderate, responsible Black leadership, that which is known as that, that "Hey, what's going wrong? Why do I have to deal with leaders of number three," who are maybe the Mike Rosses and Tyree Scotts. I've been contributing to x organization, and we have a life membership to the NAACP. What's going wrong?" Or the ones, the leadership, that's dealing out of environment number two saying, "Look, the last time you were down here, we were responsive to the fact that the policeman was wrong in shooting the 16 year old kid to the extent that we suspended him for two weeks. What's wrong? We want to work with you people. Now why can't you keep Mike Ross and Tyree Scott from being so damn radical?" Or, "Why is the community supporting him when we have offered that kind of cooperation to you too?"

Now, some people, some of the leadership operates between environment one and environment two. Some mutually—Some are only, you know, operate out of environment number one. We had a fellow who was in charge at the YMCA. He was a spokesman, articulated needs. He never got involved and positioned himself in a spotlight role between the establishment and an issue that the people—The masses of people are concerned about a given issue.

Okay. Let me raise another point now. How about another environment? We could say environment number four or leadership style number four that until the really more radical, or revolutionary type of thing, which uses clandestine means of trying to use certain power, and in that referring to Keve Bray and Dave Mills at that early point in time.

[00:08:57] **MICHAEL:** That was just what the ghetto calls a "wolf ticket." They were making noises but really not implementing. They were theorizing but not implementing. Other members of the community recognize that. That's why very few people are willing to support this brand of leadership.

[00:09:15] **WILLIAM:** But what do you call that brand of leadership?

[00:09:18] **MICHAEL:** I would say that that would be—That kind of leadership—I guess I didn’t hit on that because that’s pretty much out of date. Every now and then you do still hear some—I would call that the leadership employing—

[00:09:34] **WILLIAM:** Hoodlum tactics?

[00:09:35] **MICHAEL:** No, not hoodlum tactics. Most of it’s just rhetoric. I would say employing rhetoric as a style of leadership.

[00:09:42] **WILLIAM:** The other four, they got other means. They’re too violent. They use their violence as a means of trying to implement their strategy, and to some degree they terrorize other Black people.

[00:09:52] **MICHAEL:** I would say that some of those people using rhetoric, Black revolutionary rhetoric or nationalistic rhetoric, about the only implementation in the use of force that ever implemented was the use of violent threats and some physical assaults on other Black people. You could probably define that as a Black Revolutionary Rhetoric Leadership. Leadership through a high degree of emotionalism and wishfulness.

[00:10:23] **WILLIAM:** Wishful thinking?

[00:10:24] **MICHAEL:** Yeah.

[00:10:29] **WILLIAM:** Let’s move back to another area of leadership. How about in terms of people in the public arena, public affairs, that operate not in a usual public leadership, but like Walt Hundley, like Norward Brooks, like...I can’t think of anybody else, but—Oh, John Finley and maybe a few others that fit to that arena. How do you classify them, or you don’t classify them?:

[00:11:02] **MICHAEL:** I think you have problems classifying them in that they all are concerned about the community, and they provide leadership in terms of transfer of information, transfer of ideas, strategies, and some assistance in focusing resources to bear on problems and goals the community might have. Walt Huntley being somewhat different. Walt was in the implementation stage before for a long time as the president of CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] , where the boycotts and picketing and all that stuff was done.

[00:11:43] **WILLIAM:** But his role transitioned.

[00:11:43] **MICHAEL:** What I was going to say is that, in terms of his role, is that Walt cannot, in his present position—As Norward, here was John Finley as Mr. Smith, who was the regional administrator of the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] , they cannot—Their constituencies are not Black people. That’s not why they’re there.

[00:12:07] **WILLIAM:** Why are they there?

[00:12:09] **MICHAEL:** They’re there to some degree. They have a constituency that may be Black. Once they get into those positions, their constituency is greater than that. What I’m saying is that we don’t have any kind of political sub-division in this state that has clear Black majorities. So as a consequence, there is no elected or appointed official who can clearly say to themselves, you know, “My job is to look out after the interests of Black people and minorities.”

[00:12:41] **WILLIAM:** So what you suggest is a whole different type of politics that's played at that level. You begin talking about correlating politics that are being played at the higher level, at administrative level and elected level.

[00:12:51] **MICHAEL:** That's correct. At that level, you not only have a constituency that is a minority constituency, but you also have a constituency that may be middle-class white women, it may be liberals, it may be even conservatives.

[00:13:09] **WILLIAM:** Then how do you function in that role as a Black person with a multiplicity of constituencies and the Black population is looking at you to provide certain types of resources to that client for their interests?

[00:13:25] **MICHAEL:** I think I see where the problem comes in that you have is that you make an assumption that Black people or minorities look to you, that they have expectations of you, and that's part of the problem. They have very little expectations of you in relationship to non-people of color, who have a greater expectation of you in terms of delivering on certain kinds of issues and problems and goals.

[00:13:55] **WILLIAM:** So what you're suggesting is that people of color have less expectation on their elected officials than other people?

[00:14:03] **MICHAEL:** Minorities do.

[00:14:05] **WILLIAM:** Have less?

[00:14:06] **MICHAEL:** Yes. They don't have the—They have almost no expectations of you doing anything for them, either in an appointed official position, as an appointed public official or an elected public official. Now, when I say that, I'm talking about the majority. There may be a few who have expectations because they've gone to college.

[00:14:28] **WILLIAM:** But outside of that, you have very little pressure brought to bear on you to do anything for that particular clientele except for the other interest groups.

[00:14:39] **MICHAEL:** Yeah. The only pressure you have, and this is a question of the minorities that may come down, is that usually when they do have expectations of you accomplishing something, it's usually when they're in a case of extreme need. They either feel that they need some protection or they want something done for them, et cetera, and where they become frustrated, and that is transferred to others, which leads to even less expectations of you being able to do anything or they ask you to do things that the position doesn't allow you to do.

[00:15:18] **WILLIAM:** So greater expectation?

[00:15:19] **MICHAEL:** Yeah. Roy Ennis a couple weeks ago at the Black conference on economics and education is that, to quote him, is that "Black people have not learned how to make demands", not only to the establishment, but to people who provide leadership for them. Let me define that in illustrations. When they had the riots and rebellions, whatever you call it, in Detroit, and President Johnson had said the the masses of people in Detroit, Black people, "What do you want?" They couldn't have said totally, or if they, with the Black leadership, they don't have many demands. As an example, he said for somebody right now who's in a leadership role like himself, is somebody to ask him to organize an army with an armed division of 50 tenants.

That's something he doesn't have the capability of doing at this moment, which would be an unreasonable demand.

[00:16:24] **WILLIAM:** So how do blacks operate given the fact they don't have pressures to bear from black constituencies to perform certain types of functions within the administrative state. Do they—I'm just asking for opinion because I can really ask any ounce of category for all these people, but in terms of how do elected officials respond to the constituents, if they do?

[00:16:48] **MICHAEL:** They respond on, to some extent, how other elected officials operate. Whoever makes the most noise and gets the most attention, and also who is making noise and who's getting the attention, trying to acquire the attention.

[00:17:07] **WILLIAM:** So what occurred is that once they get put in these positions, they lose their effectiveness in the community by and large.

[00:17:13] **MICHAEL:** Well, in some cases, a lot of them got to the particular positions because they were not particularly effective in the community.

[00:17:21] **WILLIAM:** In other words, they were selected because they weren't a threat.

[00:17:26] **MICHAEL:** No, not so much. The cases that they were selecting is that the people who were effective in many other kinds of levels in the community really couldn't perceive themselves occupying the elected roles of elected officials, because they didn't understand the nature of contemporary American ballot box politics, electoral politics. Some of them had a very good understanding of the politics of the street. Some of them had an understanding of bureaucratic politics. But most of their electoral politics, they got that out of textbooks, which is just theory not you know how to practice it.

[00:18:15] **WILLIAM:** Now, since you've been in the Seattle area, who do you feel is the probably most outstanding, not a leader, but well, leader around in terms of leadership styles and performance?

[00:18:31] **MICHAEL:** The most outstanding one I know is Walter.

The main thing that most motivates most Black leaders is really their emotional commitment to at least the Black and then to maybe speaking to some extent for other minority leaders, their emotional commitment to their people and to those underdogs.

[00:18:56] **WILLIAM:** Well, that's what Thompson's said in his study in the South. He did a study in New Orleans. He was saying that the most important, most—Well, the commonality between leaders is that it all was committed to race improvement.

[00:19:14] **MICHAEL:** Okay, now there's one other different stuff that this would be. Maybe they haven't thought it out before or the cognition is not there, like it is with me. My commitment to minorities and Black people go beyond just an emotional commitment, because I have to be Black, and I know what the problems are. I have a deep vested interest in other Black people, because I view them as being the sole source of my security, my protection as a Black person in this country.

[00:19:47] **WILLIAM:** So in other words, it behooves you to maintain that constituency because that's the one that supports you.

[00:19:52] **MICHAEL:** Not just the support, I'm talking about that is what gives me my security as an individual in this society.

[00:20:01] **WILLIAM:** So, you're suggesting something else.

[00:20:04] **MICHAEL:** Yeah. I am suggesting something else that what I understand and what I have thought through is that over and beyond what is the right thing or the ideal. You know, something like race improvement is an ideal, or we shall have freedom, equality, and fraternity, which is an ideal. In this case, people struggle with this is what we want for all Black people, all minorities. Over and beyond that, I have a personal vested interest, which is the source of my security as an individual living in American society is dependent upon other minorities and Black people.

[00:20:52] **WILLIAM:** So you say the linkage between what occurred in Germany could occur here.

[00:21:00] **MICHAEL:** That possibility has always existed, right.

[00:21:03] **WILLIAM:** And you are very cognizant of that fact and the relationship between other Blacks and yourself.

[00:21:08] **MICHAEL:** Correct.

[00:21:08] **WILLIAM:** So in other words that kind of negates—You can develop our class, elitist mentality.

[00:21:13] **MICHAEL:** That's absolutely correct, because what will be done to the least of us will be done to all of us. Okay? Maybe we say it's Christian.

[00:21:24] **WILLIAM:** Well, that's a good analysis, analogy.

[00:21:35] **MICHAEL:** One of the, probably the key things to black leadership that should be restated, as stated in a few things I have read, is that the one thing that has not occurred is the development of new leadership to replace them like any other society or group does. The reason why that hasn't occurred is because the nature of racism and their own upward mobility has been one that personal insecurity is so great that they can't develop other people to replace them. So, as a consequence, what one guy learns really isn't transferred to another guy like any other kind of organizational effort or group effort, and that is a real problem. Another thing is that it goes back to the influences and how they personally look at themselves as individuals who happen to be Black, who happen to be Americans. Now the Black part comes in—A number of them have or may not appear on the outside, but have a real feeling of powerlessness in the face of majority society and any kind of confrontation might occur, and this affects the kind of leadership that they provide.

The biggest thing is, and maybe this may separate me out from a lot of other folks, is that most of them have a problem moving and dealing with various groups of people, from very rich people who may have to be white, who may be powerful, to dealing with people who may be very powerful politically, but who may not be rich, who may be white, middle-class Black folks, poor Black folks, poor white folks, middle-class white folks, middle-class Black folks. The reason for that is, in their individual personal development, the personal kind of security and knowing who and what they are isn't there. Some of them can move across different strata fairly easily. They have made it difficult with other types of strategies, mainly because, like a lot of other individuals who haven't had to deal with the obstacles of race in the society, they've picked out their kind of American role. "I'm the educated, PhD culture guy," and that's how they perceive themselves. So as a consequence, they shape their personality around that. So then they have difficulties communicating with say the Black dude who's

unemployed and on the street, but at the same time, the identification might be probably Black middle-class model, which is to be well educated and somewhat sophisticated versus being powerful and maybe crude and rude.

[00:24:30] **WILLIAM:** I already did that when I was in Olympia.

[00:24:33] **MICHAEL:** So these people, by their individual choices, which are not a lot different in terms of how you attempt to model yourself, to make yourself like the white folks, is that they get locked into that. And so, they have real difficulties dealing with the multi-strata of groups and people, that if you're going to be effective for your community, for yourself as a person of color in this country affects you, you're going to have to practice plurality, and you've got to practice integration. But their problem comes down to the security of self, or definition of self, being able to cross those kinds of lines and being a whole person.

[00:25:13] **WILLIAM:** So what you're suggesting is that they have a very negative self concept?

[00:25:17] **MICHAEL:** Yes, underneath it all, but some of it is not—You can't call it negative because it's really choices that people in the majority society have made too, how they view themselves.

[00:25:30] **WILLIAM:** Yeah, but I would venture to say that if they view themselves in a positive way at the initial point, then they could build on that, and that would create such a difficult time for them to adjust it prior to the inability you perceive what one is in terms of Black folks.

[00:25:46] **MICHAEL:** But that's not all their fault, because there have been a lot of external conditioning, not only racism, externally from the community, but within the community, like, for instance, the NAACP and Urban League did a good job, which is to get an education. Now, what's not told, and that's reasonable, that that goal was there 50 years ago, 20 years ago, 10 years ago, is that just getting an education was made a major achievement. What hasn't been told is getting education and being functional and getting education and doing something with that education. So a lot of people feel that once they got an education, they got it made, and they expected their meal—In many ways, it was a meal ticket that would be validated, and that's why a lot of them are at the post office.

[00:26:34] **WILLIAM:** I didn't know that. I was at the post office.

[00:26:38] **MICHAEL:** Well, they're at the post office, or they're in dead end jobs because they felt that education itself was kind of magic, that once they got it, all things would open up to them. That's really the condition that occurred within the community and used as an excuse for denying certain kinds of upward mobility from the external community. If you had education, you could get a job. Now, we find right now we got Black folks with education, they can't get a job, or, if they get a job, the upward mobility is severely limited.

[00:27:09] **WILLIAM:** Okay, let me raise another issue because I think you get that, at one point, you're losing out, or something else. You're not raising the issue of class that have—What impact does class have on mobility within the Black community and the types of socialization that come out of class that doesn't come out that the upper classes have, that the lower classes does not have?

[00:27:38] **MICHAEL:** Oh, the difference is, is that the—No, the results are essentially the same, except for one thing: what comes out of the upper classes in white society is maybe the same kind of behavior, expectations. The difference is the ability to deliver the white society's class and distinction is rooted in power, either through money or politics. In the Black community, it's the first or second generation that happens to have a well paying

job, and there are very little monetary or political resources there to meet the expectations that have been conditioned into the child who later on becomes an adult.

[00:28:16] **WILLIAM:** But what I'm getting at is that the middle-class Black kid is socialized in a certain way that he can take advantage of the limited type of resources, the limited type of opportunities available, whereas in a lower-class Black, if he tried to pursue he had been socialized in a certain way to even acquire the same type of thing.

[00:28:38] **MICHAEL:** There's an advantage to coming out of Black middle class, coming out of any family that provided some advantage.

[00:28:44] **WILLIAM:** And what I'm suggesting there is that, if you begin to look at the types of people who come to university, they, by and large, come from the Black middle classes.

[00:28:54] **MICHAEL:** Yeah, but when you divide the Black middle class, you can't necessarily equate that with poverty and income, because you got a Black middle class that lives in shacks. When I say a Black middle class lives in shacks, is this: that the floors are neat and clean, and there's a big stress on a lot of middle class, values like keeping clean, and the value of education as being some kind of magic that will take you away from the shack.

[00:29:20] **WILLIAM:** Yeah, I would even make a counterargument to that, I mean, that that might have been true 10-15 years ago, but I don't think that's true today. I think—

[00:29:26] **MICHAEL:** That is still true today. From personal observation and going into the homes of some people who have four or five children, the single head of household is a woman who is on welfare, will be on welfare, probably for the rest of her life, but what she has instilled in her children are middle class values and aspirations.

[00:29:52] **WILLIAM:** But the problem with that is middle class aspirations don't get you that. That's the question I'm trying to get over.

[00:29:56] **MICHAEL:** That's correct, but Black middle class—Someone coming from the Black middle class and maintaining those values learned there, may not get them there either.

[00:30:04] **WILLIAM:** But I think the skills that are translated within that culture and the type of things that are simulated over time will have to give them a much better opportunity than the person that has middle class aspirations.

[00:30:19] **MICHAEL:** To one degree, though. There's one X factor in that.

[00:30:22] **WILLIAM:** What is the X factor?

[00:30:23] **MICHAEL:** In the Black middle class, one of the main ingredients, in terms of socialization, is accommodation with the majority society and really dealing with discrimination head on, which is not the socialization that occurs quite often with the people who are poor.

[00:30:40] **WILLIAM:** Well, the thing about it is, I think that they can—

[00:30:42] **MICHAEL:** As an example, my mother always taught me don't look at the majority society as being your enemy. There are a lot of good white people, and there's some bad white people. When I got to be about

15, I kept asking, “Where are all the good white people?” That was the socialization my mother gave me, but I had to question it. Someone who maybe did not have the same kind of advantages, didn't get that kind of socialization.

[00:31:07] **WILLIAM:** But there's another form of socialization too. A form of socialization says, “Know your place and your role.”

[00:31:12] **MICHAEL:** That's what I'm saying, and this is what happens. This is a part of being the Black middle class is that you deal with problems in a nice, middle class, genteel way, which says that you got a stake in society. We have society that has a whole lot of roots of racism and vestiges left over that doesn't give you—That's false expectations, and it causes the child, sometimes or young adult psychologically to be traumatized and become non-functional, or it does not prepare that person to deal with the reality of obstacles that racism, and, to some extent, class-placing way.

[00:31:55] **WILLIAM:** But now another factor too, in terms of psychological effect is the fact of self hatred and the glorification of quiet norms, dominant society norms, and to look down upon the norms of Black society, and anything to do with Black society is a negative factor in one's life. You see it constantly.

[00:32:16] **MICHAEL:** This is false reality, because there's not but a handful of black people in this country per 1000 who are more than three generations away from the cotton field.

[00:32:28] **WILLIAM:** That's true.

[00:32:28] **MICHAEL:** Just a handful, and it's just, again, on a per 1000 basis. There's just like a grain of sand, a number of them who are three generations removed from laying bricks as free artisans before the Civil War.

[00:32:48] **WILLIAM:** But I think we constantly, have always had that problem in terms of Black folks. It's a psychological problem, and it's all due as a result of slavery.

[00:33:00] **MICHAEL:** And what I'm trying to get back to—Not just the result of slavery being the post slavery thing, it's the nature of racism too, which you don't have had slavery in order to have racism. The nature of the racism in this country is that the majority society is willing to give out more rewards to the person who's accommodating and who reflects at least a facility to adopt their kinds of norms. Again, the Black leader who says, “Yes, I've been to college,” knows how to use the right floor...

[00:33:32] **WILLIAM:** You're leaving out one factor, one other variable: race. I mean not race, color.

[00:33:38] **MICHAEL:** There is a degree from my personal observation, is that if racism, the way it operates, and somehow inherently, your color makes you either superior or inferior, whatever the dominant color is, is within that framework, but both by those who believe it, who buy it, who are affected by it, and those who perpetrate it. That the closer you are to the dominant culture, somehow or another, you're easy to deal with, except when you get off into a whole other plane, which is mental illness or illness. Mental illness where someone of the opposite sex may pick a person because of the drastic concept, opposite or may feel comfortable with that person because he does more accurately reflect the stereotype in the person's head. It works both ways.

[BREAK IN RECORDING OF INTERVIEW]

...His campaign offered Charlie Elicker had been kind of the Republican sacrificial vote to run against Scoop Jackson in 1970. They had plenty of booze and commiserate with Charlie Elicker, the Republican nominee for

United State Senate against Scoop then. There was a lobbyist there who had pretty much ran Elicker's campaign, did the media and stuff. He had gotten drunk and he told me, he said, "I don't envy you going down there because you're really going to have some problems." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, I've known George Fleming the last couple of years, and the problem that George Fleming has is just outright racism. George had to get out of the House of Representatives and go over to the Senate. He might as well not be down there." I said, "Hey, I don't—What are you talking about?" So he explained, he said, "Given Olympia, the nature of it, there are very few people of color, and those guys really hate George's guts because he's been seen with some caucasian women. There's probably nothing going on or anything, he's just been seen with them. They assumed there's some kind of dramatic relationship. A number of those women that I know are kind of attracted to George because he's been a former outstanding football player and Rose Bowl hero at the University of Washington, and he is the only minority who serves in the House of Representatives." So I said, "Oh."

So I got down to Olympia, and I had some other people tell me, "Those guys are really worried about you coming down." So the first two months I got to Olympia, very few people talked to me, other than a few of my colleagues. The rumor had gotten around, and this was partly because my first day on the first session on the floor where the minority leader, then the Democrats' Leonard Sawyer attacked me, accused me of being Black Panther and a revolutionary and all that. A lot of people just kind of believed that, and they had advanced billing rumors, and I was super radical and revolutionary for a bit, and they really had a lot of questions about me. Well, after about two months, they kind of accepted me. Then we had a sense, and I found out what was happening, and that was at the House—The budget originates out of the House of Representatives, and we were trying to pass the budget, and law requires we do it within 60 days. At least the law was at that time.

So we're waiting around for leadership to hammer a few people into line so that we could pass a budget. We're in the House cafeteria, and a guy named Duane Berentson, who's still a state representative, was chatting with me and said something about "Hey, you know, you turned out to be a pretty good fellow." I said, "Yeah, I really thought you were a son of a bitch when I first met you because you approached me at a Republican campaign school claiming I was some sort of wild-eyed, you know, playing as some sort of wild-eyed militant who was crazy." Duane then kind of put his head down and said, "Well, Mike, well, you know, the only Black person that I really knew is George Fleming, and I really didn't know what to say to you." So I gave a sensitivity session. I told him how I felt. This was very simple. I told Duane that I really didn't give a shit what he said to me because if I didn't like what he said to me, and he continued to say it, I'd try to beat his motherfucking ass. There were a lot of the senior members, representatives of both parties there overhearing this, this exchange. Duane even turned kind of red and was even more embarrassed and said, "Look, Mike, you have to understand. I know George, and George is really kind of sensitive, and a lot of us guys don't know how to talk to him." I said, "Look, I was saying, the way I feel about it is I'm not sensitive, and, again, I don't really care what you say to me. Because, if I dislike what you say to me, I will tell you, and, again, Duane, if you continue to tell me something I don't want to hear, then I'll try to beat your motherfucking ass." So, finally, one of the guys who had been staring at us spoke up and said, "Well, Mike, a lot of us had heard that you'd been involved in the construction issue, and where property was damaged, and you'd gone to jail and all that. We just thought that you would've been an unreasonable person." I explained to them that I was just like Sid Flanagan, who had been there for 20 years, who was a cattle rancher, and somebody had tried to steal his cattle or something he perceived to be his.

[INTERRUPTION]

So Sid Flanagan—I said I was just like Sid Flanagan. If you try to deny his cattle grazing rights, or if you try to take his cattle away from him, Sid will do what's necessary to protect his interests, and he'll take his 30-30 out

and try to shoot you. Ain't that right, Sid?" Sid said, "Yeah." I said, "Now, I dealt with a situation within the context that I saw, in which I used what tools were available to me. I clearly understand that I am in the House of Representatives in Washington State Legislature and those tools are not needed. I don't need to be Sid Flanagan over here with a microphone." That was the end of it.

Now, to sum it all up, my strange experience was, those fellows all felt comfortable with me—most of them, just a handful that didn't—they all wanted to take me out and buy me a drink and have dinner. You follow me? And with George Fleming and the other two minorities that were there, those kinds of invitations were very rarely extended.